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ABSTRACT

For the past several years, researchers in the field of educational administration have predicted a future shortage of qualified school administrators. In this study questionnaires sent to all public elementary and secondary principals (N=195) in 5 Southwestern Louisiana parishes produced 127 responses, a 67 percent response rate. Questionnaires were also sent to 215 teachers who were certified in educational administration. Findings indicate that the supply population of educators certified as elementary and secondary school principals would likely lead to a shortage of administrators for the years 1993-97. Of the 215 teachers certified as administrators, only 100 expressed willingness to seek principalship positions within the 5-year period. Demand is expected to be high--54 (42 percent) of the 127 principals planned to retire within the five-year time frame. Recommendations are made to: (1) conduct followup studies at state, regional, and national levels; (2) recruit and keep the most qualified students in the teaching profession and encourage them to continue their careers as administrators; (3) recruit women and ethnic minorities into administrative positions. (LMI)

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The Supply And Demand Trends Of Public School Principals and Administrators in Southwestern Louisiana: 1993-1997

(Daniel W. Jordan, Huey S. McCauley, and Jill B. Comeaux)

For the past several years, researchers in the field of educational administration have pointed to trends indicating a "future crisis resulting from a shortage of qualified, licensed school administrators" (Bowles, 1990). Although a paucity of supply and demand data exists at local, state, and national levels, the existing research indicates that the supply population of educators certified as public elementary and secondary school principals is projected to decline (Craven, 1989; Pawlas, 1989).

Researchers indicate a plethora of explanations for this projected shortage of which most can be categorized by an exodus of the existing administration and a lack of present qualified educators willing to pursue an administrative position. Persons presently in educational administrative positions are exiting the public school systems due to stress and demands caused by difficult day-to-day problems and responsibilities (Abrell, 1984; McCormick, 1987; & Pawlas, 1989); aging of administrators (Bowles, 1990; Craven, 1989; & McCormick, 1987); monetary reasons (Craven, 1989); high turnover rate (McCormick, 1987); timely or early retirement (Bowles, 1990; Pawlas, 1989; Johnson, 1987 & McCormick 1987); health reasons (McCormick, 1987); complaints of unnecessary paperwork and documentation (Pawlas, 1989); and more mandates from state departments of education (Pawlas, 1989).

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state departments of education (Pawlas, 1989).

One reason for the estimated upcoming shortage of school administrators is a projected lack of qualified educators willing to pursue administrative positions. Research indicates that there are multiple factors contributing to this scenario. Suggested reasons include: first, a smaller number of young teachers have chosen careers in school administration (Bowles, 1990). Second, women and minorities have not been used as a pool of potential school leaders despite the fact that women presently constitute more than half of those being prepared for school administration (Bowles, 1990; Johnson, 1987). Third, economic factors often restrict professional mobility (Bowles, 1990). Fourth, job security in entry-level administrative positions is becoming an increasing concern (Bowles, 1990). Fifth, entry-level administrator salaries are often insufficiently different as compared to those of teachers, especially due to increased responsibility, expanded time commitment, length of contract year, and lack of job security (Bowles, 1990).

With regard to the issue of "qualified" administrators, Bowles (1990) stated that "far too many unqualified candidates are licensed." He offers suggestions for high quality university programs and the recruitment of qualified candidates.

Studies conducted by Craven (1989) and Pawlas (1989) in the state of South Carolina indicate that the supply of public school secondary and elementary principals is projected to decline for the next 15 years while the demand is expected to increase slightly.

Additionally studies conducted by Bowles (1990) in Wisconsin and by McCormick (1987) project a future shortage of "qualified" administrators to assume the positions of a large percentage of the present experienced school executives projected to retire within the next five to eight years.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the supply and demand trends of elementary and secondary public school administrators in five selected school districts in southwestern Louisiana for the five-year period from 1993 to 1997. The primary goals of the study were to assess present supply and demand and to project supply and demand trends for school administrators through 1997. Basic demographic characteristics of existing administrators as well as the pool of educators certified and wishing to pursue administrative positions (supply population) were delineated.

Based upon recent national trends in education, it was projected that the data collected in this study would indicate an increased demand for educational administrators along with a declining population of qualified, certified young educators willing to assume the vacated positions in the region of Louisiana studied.

Procedures

This study required the collection of data from two distinct populations. First, a questionnaire was sent to all public elementary and secondary school principals in the parishes of

Acadia, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry and Vermilion of southern Louisiana with a focus on the time frame in which they expected to retire or resign. Pertinent demographic data were collected for comparison purposes. This was done in order to estimate the demand for administrators.

A second questionnaire was sent to all public school employees presently certified in the area of educational administration and supervision within this same five parish area of Louisiana but who were not employed in administrative or supervisory positions. This questionnaire focused on the educators' willingness or unwillingness to seek an administrative leadership position and attempted to delineate some of the reasons why some certified educators were not interested in available positions despite having the appropriate qualifications. Demographic characteristics were also gathered from this "supply" population.

Findings

Supply Findings of Elementary and Secondary School Principals in southwestern Louisiana

The supply population of educators certified as elementary and secondary school principals is one hundred persons as based on the returned questionnaires stating a willingness to seek principalship positions. Although a much larger number are certified (two hundred fifteen), many individuals stated that they did not wish to pursue these positions.

The certified population was generally willing to seek administrative positions immediately (fifty-six percent); however,

twenty-nine percent were interested in this position in 93-94, twelve percent in 94-95, five percent in 95-96, and two percent in 96-97.

Teaching Experience

Teaching experience of the certified population of educators consisted of 1 percent with 6-10 years, 9 percent with 11-15 years, 27 percent with 16-20 years. Sixty-two percent had more than 20 years of teaching experience.

Educational Level

The educational level of the certified population consisted of 33 percent holding master degrees, 48 percent holding masters +30 degrees, 17 percent having educational specialist degrees, and 1 percent with doctorate degrees.

Gender & Age

The gender of the certified population consisted of 39 percent male and 61 percent female. The majority of the supply population of individuals was between the ages of 40-49 (50 percent), with 25 percent between the ages of 50-59, 15 percent between the ages of 30-39, and 8 percent aged 60 and over.

Supply Data

Question number nine of the survey asked:

Are you interested in an administrative position?

___ yes ___ no ___ undecided

Seventy-four of the 127 respondents checked "no" to this question. They were then asked to indicate reasons for this

decision from the following items:

____ The difference between the entry level salary for administrators and my current salary schedule is not sufficient to provide incentive for pursuing an administrative position.

____ The job of the school administrator has increased dramatically in complexity and responsibility in recent years.

____ Resources and support available to administrators to deal with complex administrative tasks are not adequate to meet demands.

____ Family considerations may keep me from pursuing an administrative position.

____ Work as an administrator would be more stressful than my present position.

____ Longer work day and extended work year (10 month contract) may keep me from pursuing an administrative position.

____ Other _____

_____

The reasons given for not wishing to pursue administrative positions included: (they were asked to check all that apply)

33 percent checked insufficient salary

47 percent checked increased complexity and responsibility of role

36 percent checked lack of needed resources and support

26 percent checked family considerations

42 percent checked stressful conditions of position

28 percent checked longer work day and extended work year

32 percent checked "other" reasons

"Other" reasons most often delineated included: (1) political nature of selection process of administrators, (2) enjoyment of teaching position, (3) nearness of retirement, and (4) differences in school management philosophies.

Demand Findings of Elementary and Secondary School Principals in southwestern Louisiana

The total number of currently employed elementary and secondary school principals in the region studied was identified to be 195. Of the 195 questionnaires sent five were returned as undeliverable. One hundred twenty-seven questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 67 percent. Forty-two percent of these administrators indicated that they intend to retire or resign between 1993-1997, thus vacating 53 principalship positions. Ten percent planned to retire by the completion of the 1993-94 school session, 8 percent by the completion of the 1994-95 school session, 6 percent by the completion of the 1995-96 school session, and 16 percent by the 1996-97 school session.

The demographic characteristics of these current administrators is delineated below. The educational level consisted of 29 percent holding masters degrees, 50 percent having masters +30 degrees, 20 percent holding educational specialist degrees, and 1 percent having doctorate degrees. The gender of

this population consisted of 66 percent male and 34 percent female individuals. The age of the population consisted of 10 percent between the ages of 30-39, 56 percent between the ages of 40-49, 32 percent between the ages of 50-59, and 2 percent aged 60 or older. The race of the majority of the principals was Caucasian with the percentage being 71 percent while twenty-two percent were African American. Hispanics represented 7 percent.

Projected Supply and Demand Findings of Elementary and Secondary School Principals in southwestern Louisiana from 1993 to 1997

It is projected, based upon the aforementioned data, that the demand for elementary and secondary school principals in the region of southwestern Louisiana studied will increase. Approximately fifty-three positions are expected to be vacated between 1993-97. With the present supply population of only 100 persons, it is felt that it will be difficult to fill all of these positions with qualified administrators due to the small pool of candidates.

It is also projected that women and persons of ethnic minority backgrounds, who according to this study represent 61 percent and 22 percent, respectively of the certified population, will begin to hold a higher percentage of elementary and secondary school principalship positions.

It may also be the case that slightly younger candidates will begin filling these principalship positions as their older cohorts often expressed that the increase in complexity and responsibility of these jobs, often without significant increases in pay, made these positions less attractive to them.

Conclusions

The supply population of educators certified as elementary and secondary school principals will likely lead to a shortage of administrators within the 1993 to 1997 period within the five-parish region of the study. Data gathered from this region indicate that from a group of 215 teachers presently certified as elementary and secondary school administrators, only 100 were willing to seek principalship positions within the five-year period from 1993-1997.

The demand for elementary and secondary school principals within this region, however, is projected to be high within this same period of time. A large number of currently employed principals indicated they were planning to retire or resign within the period 1993 to 1997. Of 127 principals surveyed, 53 (42%) planned to retire within this time frame.

Thus, it is projected that by 1997, over fifty principalship positions will become available to a pool of only 100 certified and interested applicants. Although the supply population should be large enough to fill the available demand for the 1993 to 1997 period, the supply pool is relatively small in comparison to increasing demand. Thus, a small pool of certified, qualified candidates will be available to fill vacated positions.

Recommendations

It is suggested that follow-up studies be repeated every five years to update the information and to determine the accuracy of projected supply and demand trends for the years 1993-97. It is

also suggested that demographic characteristics of administrators be delineated to ascertain whether more women, ethnic minorities, and younger cohorts began filling administrative positions between 1993 and 1997.

Similar state, regional, and national studies should be conducted to determine supply and demand trends on a larger scale.

High schools, universities, and teaching organizations as well as businesses and chambers of commerce should combine forces to recruit and keep the most intelligent and capable students in the teaching profession. These students need to be subsequently identified and encouraged to continue their careers as administrators. Efforts should also be made to recruit women and ethnic minorities into administrative positions.

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